

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A system, comprising:
 - a control card, comprising:
 - a control processor configured and arranged to execute a control portion of an interior gateway signaling protocol; and
 - a table of label switched paths;
 - a line card, comprising:
 - a line processor configured and arranged to execute an offload portion of an interior gateway signaling protocol; and
 - at least one timer associated with each label switched path; and
 - a backplane to allow the control card and the line card to communicate.
2. (original) The network device of claim 1, the control processor further comprising a general-purpose processor.
3. (original) The network device of claim 1, the control processor further comprising an Intel Architecture processor.
4. (original) The network device of claim 1, the line processor further comprising a network-enabled processor.
5. (original) The network device of claim 1, the line processor further comprising an Intel IXP processor.

6. (original) The network device of claim 1, the backplane further comprising a physical backplane connection.

7. (original) The network device of claim 1, the backplane further comprising a network.

8. (previously presented) A method of handling an interior gateway signaling protocol, comprising:

receiving configuration information from a control card, the control card including a control processor executing a control portion of the interior gateway signaling protocol;

establishing connections with peer devices at a line card, the line card including a line processor configured and arranged to execute an offload portion of the interior gateway signaling protocol;

executing at least one state machine for each connection established at the line card;

exchanging and validating signaling protocol messages with peer devices at the line card;

and

communicating with a the control card by a line card if there is a failure or a connection status change.

9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 8, receiving configuration information from a control card further comprising receiving RSVP-TE configured peers, incoming and outgoing interface for each label switched path, and session timeout values for each label switched path.

11. (original) The method of claim 8, exchanging and validating signaling protocol messages further comprising exchanging and validating RSVP-TE HELLO messages.

12. (original) The method of claim 8, exchanging and validating signaling protocol messages further comprising exchanging and validating RSVP PATH messages.

13. (original) The method of claim 8, exchanging and validating signaling protocol messages further comprising exchanging and validating RSVP RESV messages.

14. (currently amended) A method of establishing an offload portion of a distributed interior gateway signaling protocol, comprising:

initializing a line card;

registering an offload portion of a protocol to be executed by a line processor of the line-card with a ~~central-registration-point~~ software mechanism;

setup a control connection with a control card, the control card including a control processor executing a control portion of the protocol;

transmit data resource data to the control card;

receiving configuration information from the control card;

establishing signaling connections with interior gateway peers;

performing signaling protocol functions at the line-card; and

communicating with the control card by the line-card during failures or signaling connection changes.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, registering an offload portion further comprising registering with a distributed control plane architecture infrastructure module.

16. (original) The method of claim 14, performing signaling protocol functions further comprising exchanging and validating RSVP-TE messages.

17. (original) The method of claim 14, performing signaling protocol functions further comprising executing at least one state machine for each signaling connection.

18. (currently amended) A method of establishing a control portion of a distributed interior gateway signaling protocol, comprising:

initializing a control card;

registering a control portion of a protocol to be executed by a control processor of the control card with a ~~central registration point~~ software mechanism;

setting up control connections with line-cards, each line card having a line processor to execute offload portions of the protocol;

configuring the line cards by providing information with regard to signaling peers, link switched paths, and link switched path timeout periods; and

performing central signaling protocol functions.

19. (original) The method of claim 18, registering a control portion of a protocol to be executed further comprising registering the control portion with a distributed control plane architecture infrastructure module.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, performing central signaling protocol functions further comprising controlling admission to signaling connections.

21. (original) The method of claim 18, performing central signaling protocol functions further comprising setting quality of service parameters.

22. (currently amended) An article of machine-readable ~~code containing instructions~~ medium encoded with machine executable instructions that, when executed, cause the machine to:

receive configuration information from a control card, the control card including a control processor executing a control portion of a router control protocol;

establish connections with peer devices at a line card, the line card including a line processor configured and arranged to execute an offload portion of the router control protocol;

execute at least one state machine for each connection established at the line card;

exchange and validate signaling protocol messages with peer devices at the line card; and communicate with a the control card by the line-card if there is a failure or a connection status change.

23. (original) The article of claim 22, the instructions causing the machine to exchange and validate signaling protocol messages with a peer device further causing the machine to exchange and validate RSVP-TE HELLO messages.

24. (original) The article of claim 22, the instructions causing the machine to exchange and validate signaling protocol messages with a peer device further causing the machine to exchange and validate RSVP-TE PATH messages.

25. (original) The article of claim 22, the instructions causing the machine to exchange and validate signaling protocol messages with a peer device further causing the machine to exchange and validate RSVP-TE RESV messages.

26. (original) A system, comprising:
a control card, comprising:
a control processor configured and arranged to execute a control portion of a routing protocol; and
a control version of a link state database;
a line card, comprising:
a line processor configured and arranged to execute an offload portion of a routing protocol; and
a local version of a link state database; and
a backplane to allow the control card and the line card to communicate.

27. (original) The network device of claim 26, the control processor further comprising a general-purpose processor.
28. (original) The network device of claim 26, the control processor further comprising an Intel Architecture processor.
29. (original) The network device of claim 26, the line processor further comprising a network-enabled processor.
30. (original) he network device of claim 26, the line processor further comprising an Intel IXP processor.
31. (original) The network device of claim 26, the backplane further comprising a physical backplane connection.
32. (original) The network device of claim 26, the backplane further comprising a network.
- 33.-48. (canceled)